

THE DOMINION



OF NEW ZEALAND

Occupational Information for Intending Emigrants

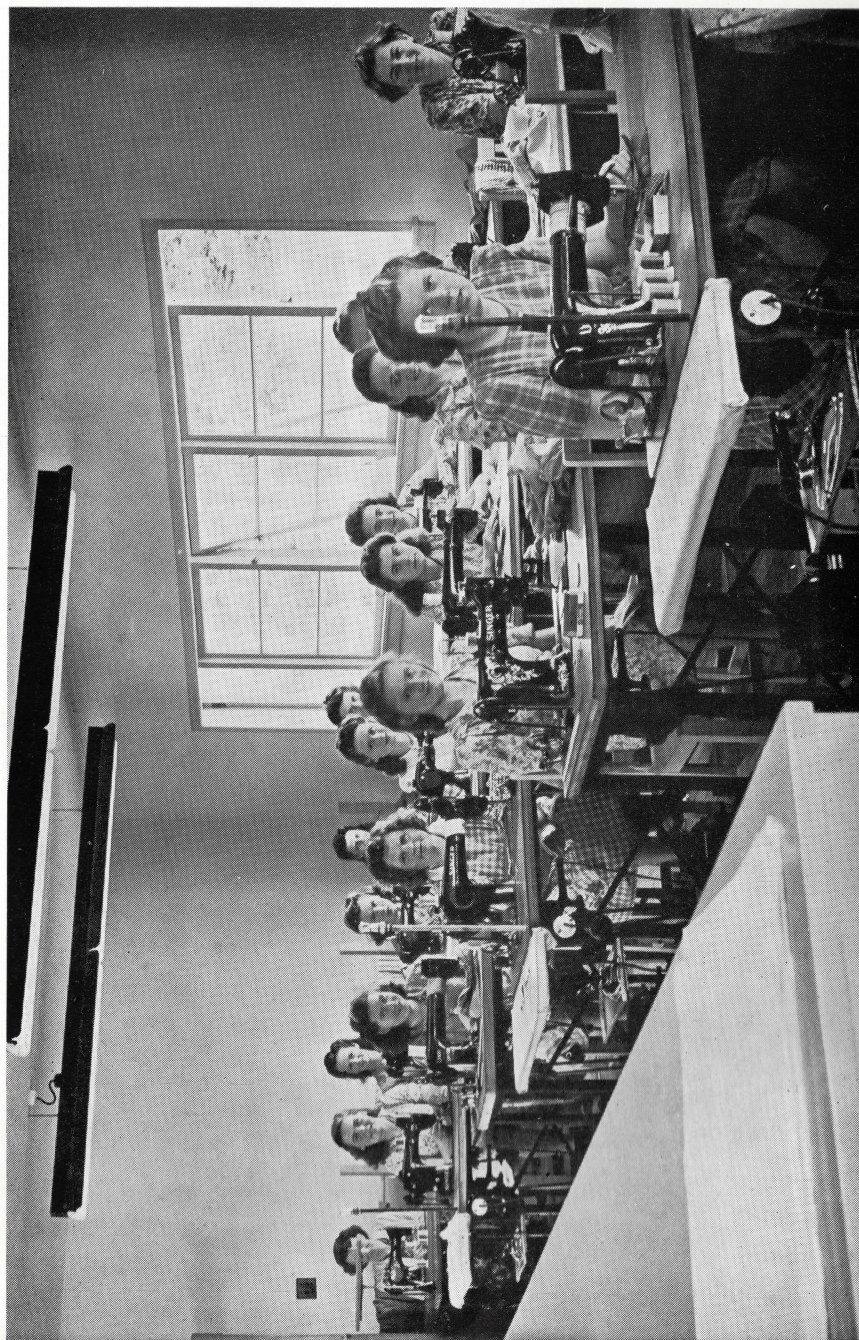


The cutting and machine sections of an up-to-date clothing factory.

The Clothing and Footwear Industries.

*Issued by the Immigration Division of the Department of Labour
and Employment, Wellington, New Zealand.*





These young machinists consider they have made a happy choice of career.

Introduction to the Series of Occupational Information Booklets

Clothing trade and footwear trade workers who are contemplating migrating to New Zealand will naturally raise many questions on present-day living and social conditions in the Dominion. They will want to know about the climate, housing, taxation, social security, etc., and most important of all—how to get to New Zealand. To provide the answers to these and other questions the Government of New Zealand has published a general information booklet entitled "Prospects of Settlement in New Zealand." That booklet will be of wide interest to persons who have in view the taking up of work in New Zealand clothing and footwear factories.

As a supplement to "Prospects of Settlement in New Zealand," a series of special booklets has been prepared relating to certain industries. The booklets of this series cover a broad outline of the industries concerned, describing just exactly what classes of work each includes, the standards of skill necessary, special trade practices in vogue, the types of machines in use, and the kit of tools to be provided by workers. They also make special mention of overseas trade and other qualifications which are acceptable in New Zealand, and they comment on any likely differences between work in the industry in Britain and New Zealand. Information is also given of hours of work, rates of wages, and the location of the main factories or units of the industries.

The prospective emigrant, having read the general information booklet, and the booklet covering the industry in which he or she is engaged or interested, will have some knowledge of the living and working conditions which he or she can expect to find upon arrival in the Dominion. This booklet relates to the clothing and footwear industries. Any further particulars required can be obtained from the High Commissioner for New Zealand, 415 Strand, London, W.C.2., or from the Director of Employment, National Employment Service, Wellington, New Zealand.

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I. THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY

The Industry in New Zealand.

The clothing industry in New Zealand has since its establishment largely followed the trade practices in operation in Great Britain. The differences in procedure between the two countries would be of minor importance, and skilled operators who have learnt the trade in Britain would find little difficulty in settling down to work in New Zealand clothing factories. With the large number of vacancies at present existing in these factories, experienced workers could be readily absorbed, and they would be assured of permanent employment in this expanding industry. Opportunities also occur for girls and women who are anxious to learn the well-paid trade under the excellent conditions generally prevailing.

The industry is divided into several main sections. These sections comprise the manufacture of the following:

Men's and boys' outer wear garments.

Women's and girls' outer wear garments.

Women's and girls' underwear.

Shirts and pyjamas.

Children's and infants' wear.

Handkerchiefs and ties.

*Knitted garments and hosiery.

Corsets.

Hats and millinery.

Gloves—fabric and leather.

Canvas clothing.

Household linen.

and also Bespoke tailoring.

Clothing firms vary in size from small units employing 3 or 4 workers to large factories engaging up to 250 workers. The larger factories may manufacture several types of clothing but the smaller specialise in one or two of the above classes.

*This is the subject of a separate booklet.



A typical factory building. The large window area permits ample lighting and ventilation.

The Nature of the Work.

The clothing industry is predominately a "female" industry in that it employs a far greater proportion of women than men.

Women.

In all sections of the industry except the outer-wear groups the bulk of the women are engaged as machinists and use the various electrically operated machines. In some of the outer-wear factories the table workers exceed the machinists in number as one machinist is sometimes able to keep several table workers employed. Machinists usually commence as untrained school-leavers, but in view of the present shortages in the industry employers are prepared to employ and train inexperienced women of any age provided they are machine conscious, possess reasonable manipulative dexterity, and are willing to learn. Learners are first taught the machining of one special operation, and after becoming proficient at this they are moved on to another operation, and so on. They thus obtain experience on all the different types of machines.

Women are also employed as cutters, pressers, table workers, finishers and basters, and as folders. Cutting is performed with shears or by machine, depending upon the class of article being produced. The heavier pressing work is restricted to men, and women are only required to undertake seam-opening or under-pressing. A keen demand exists for basters and finishers and many firms are prepared to train women for that work provided they have some skill as needle women.

Men.

The work for men in the clothing industry (excluding bespoke tailoring) is confined to cutting, pressing, and examining, although some firms are now engaging male machinists. Cutters are classified as either "stock cutters" or "second class chart-cutters". The former undertake the laying up, chalking in, and cutting by shears or machine of all types of clothing; whilst the latter cut to measure from block patterns supplied by the employer. When stock cutters are called upon to add to or deduct from their patterns they are classed as chart-cutters and qualify for the higher rate of pay applicable to that work.

Pressers are required to press off finished garments by hand or by pressing machine. This calls for a fairly high standard of physical fitness.

The examiners inspect the completed garments for defects and pass them on for folding and despatch.

Opportunities for the employment of skilled men are excellent, but inexperienced men would find suitable openings more difficult to secure.

Degree of Specialisation.

In New Zealand clothing factories great emphasis is laid on the chain or team system. Under this system a machinist carries out a



In some factories each machinist has her own individual table.



The corner of another machine room showing a conveyor belt system. certain specified operation on the garments produced. The articles then pass on to other machinists for further stages in their manufacture. The length of the chain, and the amount of work performed by each operative depends on the extent to which labour can be obtained. A few of the larger factories have conveyor belts installed. Specialisation is also extended to other operations such as finishing work and pressing. The tendency is for as much of the work as possible to become sectionalised.

In some types of factories, however, particularly the smaller units, one machinist makes a complete garment on her own, but generally throughout the industry the chain system is the standard method of production.

The Tailoring Trade.

The great majority of men in New Zealand purchase their suits ready-made or made-to-measure. Made-to-measure suits are factory produced on the lines indicated in the preceding paragraphs; i.e., the material is cut by chart and made up by machinists on the chain system. The average quality of the workmanship and suitings used is of an excellent standard, the cheap types of ready-made suits being in little demand.

The number of high class bespoke tailoring firms is on the wane, but there is still a demand for male coat hands. Experienced tailors

are also employed in some of the higher grade factories on finishing and supervising work.

The Types of Machines and Equipment in Use.

All the latest types of the best British or American machines are in general use including plain sewing, overlocking, chain stitching, button holing, braiding, bartacking, basting, banding, lockstitch, blind stitch, fronting, yoking, etc. Popular brands of machines are Singer, Union Special, and Reece.

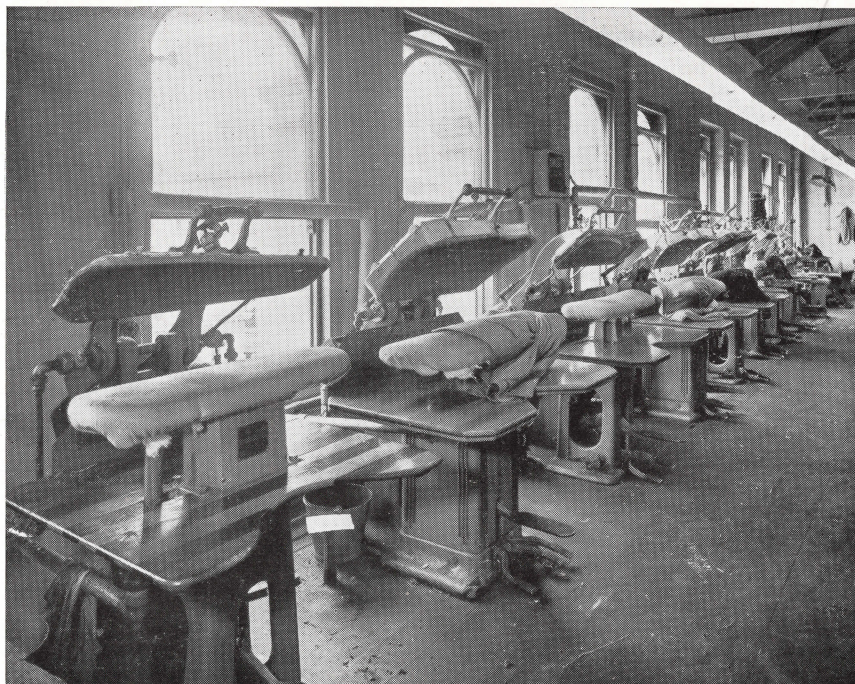
The American electric cutting machine with the up and down blade is more universal than the English band knife cutting machine. A skilled band knife cutter should become equally skilled with the American machine after about three months' experience. Among pressing machines in use are the Hoffman Long Bed steam presser, the Zachariah presser, and the Prosperity Grip hand presser.

Recognition of Overseas Experience.

Machinists, table hands, cutters, pressers, and other workers, both male and female, trained in Britain would be very acceptable to the industry in New Zealand. The ability to operate the machines and equipment or to ply a needle proficiently, is what is looked for by employers when engaging labour for skilled jobs. As men-



A factory cafeteria prepares for the midday rush. Workers purchase meals at very reasonable prices.



A bank of pressing machines in an outer-wear factory.

tioned earlier, however, inexperienced persons who are able to fit into the industry are also acceptable.

Clothing trade workers are advised to take with them a clearance from their trade union and a certificate of service or reference from their employers.

Hours of Work and Holidays.

The ordinary hours of work are 40 per week worked between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays inclusive. In addition overtime is worked in some factories, and is paid at the rate of one and a half times the ordinary rate for the first three hours, and at double rates thereafter.

Two weeks' holiday on full pay are granted per annum, and it is the general practice for this to be taken at the Christmas-New Year period, the middle of the New Zealand summer. In addition there are nine paid public holidays throughout the year.

Rates of Wages.

The rates of wages payable are governed by the provisions of Industrial Awards or Agreements covering the various sections of

the industry. The Award rate is the minimum wage which can be paid, but most employers pay at higher rates particularly where workers show more than average ability.

The Award rates in January, 1947 were as follows:—

Clothing, Dressmaking, Shirts etc., Millinery and Gloves.

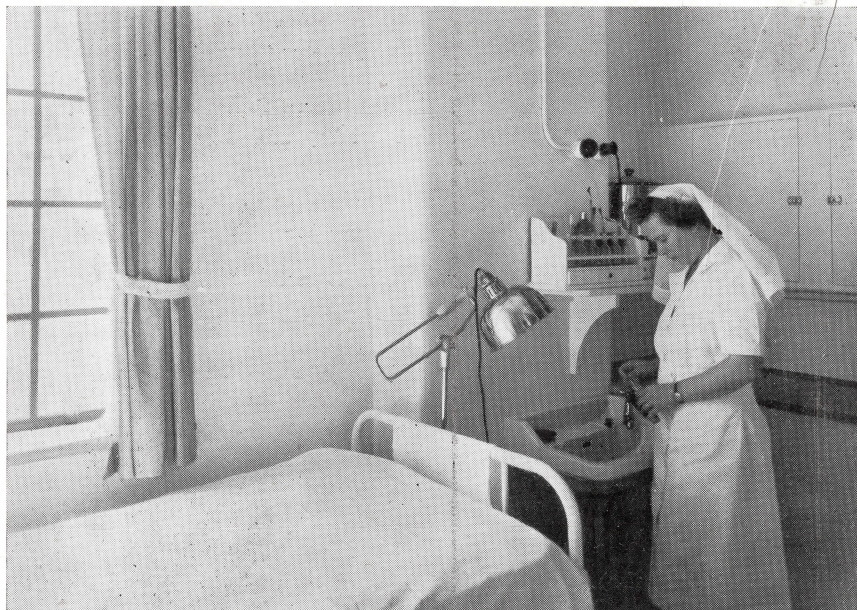
	per week		
	£	s	d
<i>Women.</i>			
Journey-women (machinists and table hands)	3	10	0
Journey-women (cutters)	4	0	0
Journey-women (sorting, boxing, & distribution)	3	7	6
Journey-women (glove workers)	3	10	0
<i>Men.</i>			
Cutters (stock)	6	0	0
Cutters (2nd class chart)	6	5	0
Pressers	5	10	0
Examiners	6	0	0
Machinists	6	0	0
Glove cutters (1st class)	6	5	0
Glove cutters (2nd class)	6	0	0

Tailoring (Bespoke).

<i>Women.</i>			
Journey-women employed on coats.	3	15	0
Other journey-women and machinists.	3	10	0
<i>Men.</i>			
Tailors and pressers.	6	0	0



Clothing operatives frequently receive free tuition in dressmaking.



Many firms have fully equipped first aid facilities for their staffs.

Two Cost-of-Living Allowances are payable in connection with the above rates. The first allowance increases the rates by 5%, and the second provides for an additional payment of 5/- per week for men and 2/6 per week for women.

The bonus system whereby a production bonus is granted for output in excess of a set negotiated standard has become common, and it results in high pay for efficient workers. Members of the team achieving the excess output share in the bonus, and in no case can they draw less than the award wages.

Working Conditions.

The work in New Zealand factories is congenial and clean, and the buildings are airy and well lit. Clothing factories have to comply with standards laid down by law. Most workrooms are equipped with radios so that employees have music while they work. Some factories too, provide other amenities including cafeterias where a hot mid-day meal may be purchased at a moderate charge, first aid rooms with qualified nurses in attendance, and sometimes dressmaking is taught free of charge. At all clothing factories a break is made for morning and afternoon tea.

The five day week leaves Saturday and Sunday free for leisure and private pursuits. Sport plays an important part in the lives of



Some employers provide working overalls for their operatives.

New Zealanders, and many factories have teams of girls competing regularly in cricket, basketball, and baseball weekend competitions. In several cities industrial and retail firms have formed Interhouse Associations which conduct competitions between the member firms in marching, tableau displays, and athletics.

Location of the Industry.

Clothing factories are located in the following cities in order of importance:

Auckland.

Wellington.

Christchurch.

Dunedin.

Factories also exist in many of the smaller towns and decentralisation is being encouraged on an increasing scale. The industry, however, is still mainly located at the above four centres.

II. THE FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

The Industry in New Zealand.

In a like manner to the clothing industry, New Zealand's footwear manufacturing industry follows the accepted trade practices which are recognised throughout the world. Her factories manufacture all types of footwear in all sizes, grades and qualities, and substantially by all the various and usual processes. Owing to the high standard of living in New Zealand there is little demand for cheap grades of footwear. In order to maintain high quality and to protect the consumer, the Government has recently introduced regulations requiring all footwear to be branded either with the name of the manufacturer or with the "Standard mark" denoting workmanship of an approved quality.

Machines and equipment in use are mainly supplied by the British United Shoe Machinery Co., Ltd., and as a rule the plants are laid out on the lines recommended by that organisation. Factories vary in size from minor units employing six or seven hands to



A bottom stuff operator cutting out soles with the machine press.



Machining uppers in the closing room.

major concerns with up to three hundred employees. There are altogether eighty-six footwear manufacturing units in New Zealand employing approximately 4,500 workers. A considerable number of additional employees could, however, be readily engaged.

With the exception of a percentage of children's leather shoes and to some extent rubber shoes, New Zealand normally produces its full requirements of footwear.

The Classes of Work.

As in other countries the various operations in the production of footwear have become highly specialised. In the larger factories manufacture is divided into six main sections, the work in each being highly skilled. These sections are:

(a) *Bottom stuff or rough stuff*, where soles, heels and other shoe bottom leather components are cut from vegetable tanned leather manufactured by New Zealand tanneries to the sizes and shapes required, assembled, and made ready for attachment to the uppers. Male labour is employed on the machine presses utilised for this work.

Many smaller factories do not cut their own bottom stuff, but purchase soles, insoles, runners, built-up heels, and stiffeners from firms specialising in this work.

(b) *Clicking*, comprising the cutting by hand or by special clicking press, of parts of the uppers (with linings) from patterns provided. The standard of skill in the clicking room called for is very high, and at least three years of training are necessary before a clicker usually attains the required knowledge, speed, accuracy, judgment and dexterity. In most of the larger factories clicking is done by clicking press, except where short runs are required. Males only are engaged on this work. At one time the great bulk of upper leather used, including all the higher grade skins (tanned), was imported from Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. However, in recent times acute shortage of upper leather from overseas sources has enlarged considerably the demand for bobby calf and finer side leather now manufactured to a satisfactory standard and in ever increasing quantities by New Zealand tanners.

(c) *Machining or closing*. In this section the uppers cut by the clickers are sewn together by women and girls using power sewing machines. Other operations by female workers in this room include skiving, beading, french binding, eyeletting, bagging, post trimming, vamping, button-holing, fancy stitching, and also the lacing together of parts so that they will remain in their correct relative positions throughout the subsequent processes of manufacture. At many factories the machinist specialises in stitching alone, the uppers hav-



In the welting room. Working conditions in New Zealand footwear factories are excellent.

ing first been assembled and fitted by workers specially trained for that purpose. As a general rule the machinist is trained on several machines, and can readily adapt herself to the various machine operations.

Machinists in New Zealand footwear factories have up to recently invariably been women, but some firms are now experimenting with some success with the employment of male machinists, particularly men suffering from disabilities arising out of war service.

(d) *Making section*. Operatives in the making room are engaged in the important operations of lasting, pulling-over and stitching, involving the fastening together of uppers and bottom stock. In many factories workers specialise in at least two of the machine operations. The degree of specialisation is dependent upon the production of the particular factory.

The various production processes usually in use are as follows:—

- (i) Machine sewn,
- (ii) Cemented,
- (iii) Weltd,
- (iv) Screwed and stitched,
- (v) Veldtschoen,
- (vi) Pumps,
- (vii) Cosy.

Lasts of British and American design made locally are used, and several well-known brands of English, Scottish and American shoes are manufactured in New Zealand under license.

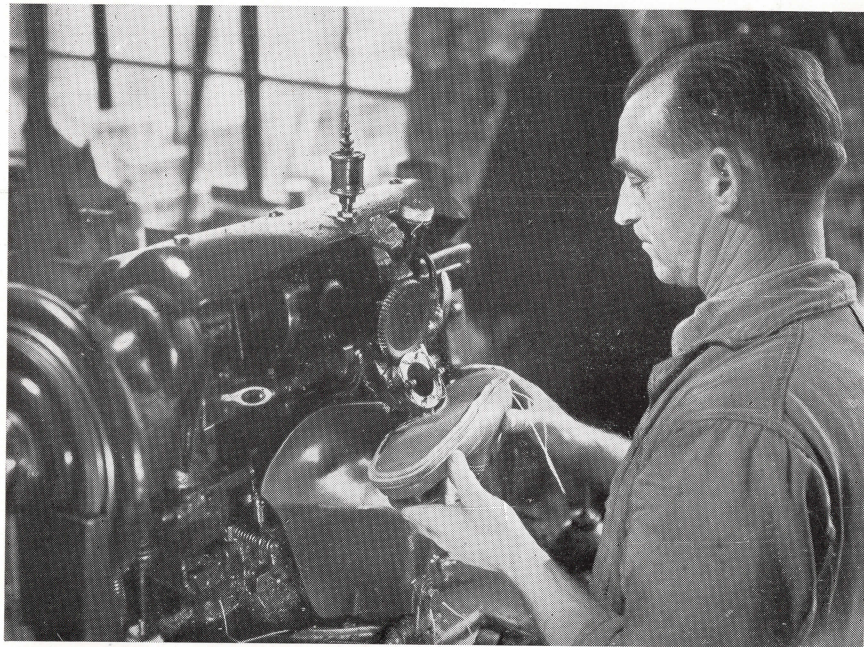
Work in the making room is relatively heavy and men and boys only are engaged in this section.

(e) *Heeling and Finishing Department*. From the making room the boots and shoes pass to the heeling and finishing department. Here the heels are attached and the edges and heels trimmed, bevelled, brushed, and painted or coloured. The work is less strenuous than making, but heavier than clicking. Men and boys, solely, are engaged on this work.

(f) *Cleaning and boxing section*. Women and girls are employed in two sections in footwear factories. The majority are in the machine room, the remainder being engaged in the cleaning and boxing section where cleaning, socking, ironing of uppers, lacing, and boxing for despatch are carried out.

Gumboots and Rubber Footwear.

It is not intended to dealt at length with the manufacture of gumboots and rubber footwear, as this is a separate industry outside the scope of the footwear industry proper. In recent years, New



British operatives will recognise this out-sole stitching machine.

Zealand has developed the manufacture of rubber footwear, and a large factory has been established at Christchurch. This factory produces high grade qualities of thigh, knee, and ankle gumboots by the fabrication method, and also vulcanised rubber canvas shoes. Another rubber firm in the Hutt Valley is preparing for the manufacture of gumboots by the latex dipping process. A number of women machinists are engaged on making the uppers for the canvas shoes. All the other operations connected with the manufacture of both shoes and gumboots are performed by male workers on the chain system. These men commence as untrained workers and are taught one or more of the operations on the chain.

Machines in Use.

The plant in the New Zealand footwear factories is largely supplied by the British United Shoe Machinery Co., Ltd. The Company usually designs the lay-out of the factory, gives technical advice, and maintains the machinery. This equipment is standardised and is identical with that in use in Great Britain and other countries. Much of the machinery is of the latest design, as footwear companies generally endeavour to keep their plants as up-to-date as possible.

In the closing room, Singer, Union and Jones power sewers are the popular makes of machines.

Recognition of Overseas Experience.

New Zealand has always been ready to recognise the skill of overseas workers, particularly those of Great Britain and the United States. A worker who has served a period in a recognised overseas house would have no difficulty in obtaining a position in the industry in New Zealand.

Intending emigrants, if already union members, should take with them a clearance from their union. It would also be advisable to possess a certificate of service or reference from their employers.

Some Differences Between Work in Trade in New Zealand and Overseas.

As mentioned earlier, trade practices in New Zealand and Britain are very similar, but as New Zealand has a much smaller population, the industry is on a lesser scale. The intensive specialisation possible in the larger British factories is not practicable in New Zealand, and a footwear worker there is frequently required to undertake work which in Britain would be divided between several different operators. In Britain, for example, the activities associated with the last-in department are in some factories worked upon the team system. Each operative thus becomes an expert at the particular operation he performs, and he is frequently unable, without further training, to work more than his own special machine. That position would apply in most departments. The New Zealand system of less intensified division of labour gives a greater variety of work, but it also means that a worker must become versatile.

Employment Opportunities.

In common with all other industries, the footwear manufacturing industry is at present experiencing a shortage of skilled operatives. Opportunities therefore occur for all classes of experienced workers who are desirous of migrating to New Zealand. Vacancies for inexperienced males would, however, be limited, as the period of training necessary would restrict the number who could be employed in the various departments. Inexperienced females would on the other hand be readily acceptable for the cleaning and boxing department, and, provided they were machine conscious, for the machining department also. Clothing machinists should have no difficulty in changing over to footwear machining.



The clicking department of one of the larger factories.

Hours of Work and Holidays.

The ordinary hours of work are forty per week, worked between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays inclusive. In addition over-time is worked in some factories and is paid for at one and a half times the ordinary rate for the first four hours in any one week, and at double rates thereafter.

Every employee receives two weeks' holiday per year on full pay, which is generally taken at the Christmas-New Year period—the middle of the New Zealand summer. In addition to the two weeks' annual holiday, a paid holiday is granted on each of the following days: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Labour Day, King's Birthday, and Anniversary Day.

Rates of Wages.

The rates or wages payable are governed by the provision of the Industrial Award covering conditions within the industry. The award rate is the minimum permissible wage which can be paid, and many employers pay wages at higher rates.

The award wages in February 1947 were:

Footwear Trades:—

	£	s	d	
All male employees		3	0	per hour
Women (first six months)	3	2	6	per week
Women (after six months)	3	10	0	per week
Women Liquid-wax-thread machinists (first six months)	3	8	9	per week
Women Liquid-wax-thread machinists (after six months)	3	17	6	per week

Rubber Footwear:—

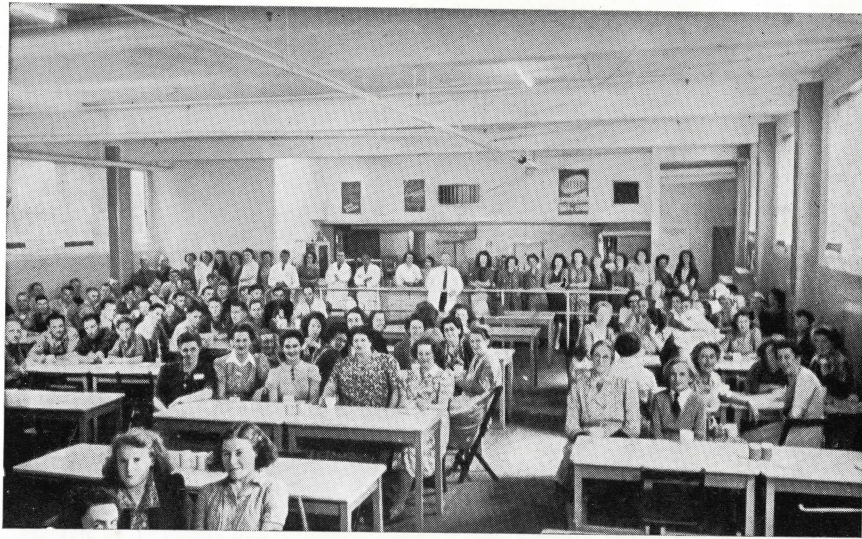
	£	s	d	
Women (first twelve months)	3	3	0	per week*
Women (experienced)	3	5	0	per week
Males—Vulcanisers, press hands, clickers, etc.	5	11	8	per week

*This is the basic rate under the Minimum Wage Act, and is not plus the usual Cost-of-Living Allowances.

Two Cost-of-Living Allowances are payable in connection with all the above rates, with the exception noted. The first allowance



Gumboots are manufactured by the chain method.



A footwear factory cafeteria. The spacious windows and clean paint-work give it a bright and healthy appearance.

increases the rates by 5%, and the second provides for an additional payment of 5/- per week for men and 2/6d. per week for women.

Bonus and profit participation schemes in the New Zealand footwear factories are limited, although there is a tendency for the scope of such schemes to increase.

Location of the Industry.

Footwear factories are established in the cities of Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin in order of importance, but there are also a few small factories outside these centres.

Conditions and Amenities.

New Zealand's footwear factories are, like her clothing factories, of a high standing and they compare very favourably with similar factories in other countries. The Award and the Factories Act stipulate certain minimum standards, but the conditions in the average factory are well above the standards laid down.

Several firms provide such amenities as cafeteria services, while all factories observe breaks of ten minutes for morning and afternoon tea.

Emigrants will be pleased to find that the factories are seldom situated in highly congested over-built areas, and that the industrial centres usually have wide sunny streets with freedom from smoke and dust.

The Future.

The well established clothing and footwear industries protected from unfair overseas competition, offer permanent employment for proficient workers. New Zealand has a relatively high standard of living and this is reflected in wide demands for clothes and shoes. Clothing and footwear are healthy and prosperous industries and hold ample opportunities for those persons desiring to make New Zealand their future home.

Back Cover:

A general view of a small self-contained clothing factory.